[113 cont.]

437 Dillon, however, p. 163, says that gifts were always offered in return for gifts given to them.

found transactions tiresome because in each case the seller entered into long consultations with the bystanders about the price he should accept (9). [114] Joest says that the only things

9. Dewar, p. 248.

[181] that will induce the native to get up early are war and making money; everyone wants to become a capitalist. The same [577] traveler maintains that they cheat whenever they can, and even if they are caught at it, they show neither shame nor embarrassment (1).

1. Joest in Baessler, pp. 373 f., 391 f. However, cf. Moresby, pp. 82 and 87.

436 In former times shell money supposedly was used on Ndeni, probably like the strings of shell disks worn around the neck and the body (2). A peculiarity of the group, which incidentally, is

2. Codrington, p. 324.

confirmed only for Ndeni and the Reef Islands, [Fig. 43 appears here] is feather money (3). Each piece (Fig. 43) consists of a

[113] 3. Cf. E.H. Giglioli in Archivio per l'Antropologia e Etnologia, XXXV, pp. 389 ff. Edge-Partington, I, 165, No. 1. Codrington, p. 324. Coote, p. 155. (The statement that feather money is actually worn around the body like a belt on festive occasions, as Coote maintains, is undoubtedly only a vague conjecture.) Joest, Tagebuch, p. 53.

[114 cont.]

436 kind of long strap made of fibers wound around two stout cords -- in part with two additional lighter central cords -- as a base. This strap is covered along its entire length with overlapping tile-shaped scales of pigeon feathers, and on the upper side of these [825] scales are pasted the delicate red feathers of Trichoglossus massena,

Fig. 43. Feather money (Berlin VI 16005, Joest Coll.). Total length 7.135 meters, width 4.2 cm., width of bark spirals 16 and 18 cm.

[223] a kind of parrot. The birds are caught with lime twigs deep in the bush, but before that the hunter may not eat anything hot or fat (4). The Berlin piece of money shows a rhombic black and

4. Codrington, loc. cit.

white plaiting in the middle of the underside, on the edges of which are two tufts of fibers. The ends show sewing with pieces of palm leaves and a plaited cord that comes to a point and ends in tufts of fibers and two strings. The latter are fastened to the two bark spirals on which the money is wound. Often [115] pieces of wood, carved in a variety of ways and decorated with Coix chains, are also fastened to the ends of the money. Instead [237 778] of them there may be pigs' teeth or special stones that have a religious significance and are said to be more highly prized than money itself (1).

[115 cont.]
436 money itself (1). The pieces of money seen and collected by

1. Edge-Partington, I, 165, Nos. 1, 2; 163, Nos. 2-4.

European travelers were all old, usually so old that the parrot-feather trimming had become insignificant or invisible and the specimens looked like old leather straps (2). During spe-

2. Coote, p. 155. Director Foy tells me that well-preserved, that is, new specimens are to be found in the museum in Cambridge.

[556] cial festivities the pieces belonging to the host are displayed at the place where the festivities are held. According to Codrington, there are also shorter pieces for daily use, but in former times shell money probably served for this purpose.
[583] The bride price is paid exclusively in feather money (3).

3. Codrington, p. 239. Joest in Baessler, p. 379.

802 It is in keeping with the commercial talents of the natives that they can easily count up to 100,000, according to Joest. When they count with their hands, they compute with the fingers bent; thus the closed fist with the thumb tucked under means five, with one finger outstretched, four, and so forth. Joest did not find them counting with their feet (4). Markham mentions a sort of knotted string made of

4. Joest in Baessler, p. 393.

strips of palm leaf, which he interprets as a counting device. When the body of Bishop Patteson was returned, the string
[764] was found in the folds of the tapa in which the corpse was
000 wrapped. According to Markham's interpretation, the five

[145 cont.] Joest,
304 contrary to Dillon, says that circumcision is not customary on Ndeni (3).

3. Dillon, p. 314. Joest in Baessler, p. 378. On the basis of our present knowledge, local differences cannot be excluded with absolute certainty.

836 On Ndeni premarital intercourse between the sexes is
684 not practiced, according to Joest, but rather is punished by death, perhaps because originally, with the local organization, it was
548 identical with incest (4). On the other hand, prostitution is
567

4. Joest in Baessler, p. 386; Tagebuch, p. 63.

associated with the life in the bachelors' houses and also in related areas of the culture. Three or four men buy a girl for feather money, usually a child, because children are still cheap, and, for the same reason, a child is chosen preferably from a small kin group because each relative demands a share of the purchase price. After she has reached maturity, the girl is used and provided for jointly by the buyers, as well as hired out
●[436] in exchange for feather money, pigs, or coconuts. The proceeds are divided in proportion to the amount contributed toward the purchase price. The girl gets none of it, but she is well
[554] provided for, is the social equal of the other women, and even enjoys the privileges of living in the bachelors' house, which the other women may not enter. The buyers do not have the right to kill her; the entire village would avenge the murder. When the buyers are tired of the girl, they take her to another village and auction her off, which is always an important event for the populace. Eventual children belong to all the buyers

/156 cont./

854 the larger children riding on the back (male children by the father). Documentation for Tumotu: O'Ferrall, Santa Cruz and the Reef Islands, the section "A New School Village"; for the Reef Islands: Coombe, plate facing p. 211, and Speiser, Südsee, Ill. 94, and 96.]

855 Children are treated tenderly (1), but they seem to love them chiefly because they are entertain-
[562] ing. The woman is apparently despised, but there are cases of conjugal love.

181 /157/ The bargaining instinct is strongly pronounced,
437 but they are not dishonest or particularly avaricious in trading. On the other hand, the people are rather thievish, and to be sure not altogether because they are accustomed to a certain communism, as seems to be the case on Polynesian islands.

574 The visitor to a village is usually taken to the men's house, where he is offered a clean mat and a headrest and is served food as a token of hospitality (1). According to Coombe,

1. [Speiser, Südsee, p. 293. Coombe, p. 180, mentions the extravagant generosity of the Nitendi people toward
[576] strangers. Yet etiquette requires that one not talk much with a guest (ibid., p. 182).]

[576] p. 182, however, it is improper to show pleasure over a gift
[431] because this implies that the giver has made a great sacrifice and is a poor man. They like to show a guest their possessions,
[436] especially the best roll of feather money. Also, the men are not unwilling to show their skill in weaving and plaiting nets.
[462] This brings about a certain familiarity, so that one easily forms
181 too favorable an opinion of the people, until he again has occasion to observe their baser instincts.

/188 cont./

226 "In the coral along the shore one often sees bowl-shaped depressions in which plants are pounded, the juice of which is used to poison the fish in the fissures of the coral reefs" (4).]

4. [Speiser, Südsee, p. 297.]

225 [On the Reef Islands dolphins and turtles are encircled by boats and driven onto shore. The one who leaps into the water and turns the turtle upside down is entitled to the thickest [301] portion of the shell, which is used for making nose rings; the [825] other parts of the turtle are distributed by the chief (5).]

5. [Girieud and Herrenschmidt, p. 106.]

224 Pigs are often caught in nets (Basel V 1996), which are knotted out of strong ropes of coconut fiber. The nets are set up where the pigs usually pass and the animals are driven into them (6).

6. [Speiser, Südsee, p. 297.]

223 [In catching birds -- namely, those with the red feathers [836] that are made into money-rolls -- /189/ the hunter covers him- [825] self with leaves and imitates the bird's call in order to lure his victim onto the lime-twig (1).]

1. [O'Ferrall, section "Historical Sketch" (= Coombe, p. 189). See also below, p. 87, footnote 3. -- O'Ferrall (= Coombe, p. 187) also mentions the bird arrows shown in Ethn., I, p. 101.]

/191 cont./

438 [548] Nitendi men in order to rear them as village prostitutes, while the Reef Islanders obtain sago from their previously mentioned properties on Nitendi (7). It cannot be said that the natives 439

7. [See above, pp. 71 f.]

of Nitendi are more unpleasant in trading than the other primitive inhabitants of the South Seas. As a rule, they come to an agreement rather quickly, and a constant rise in prices seldom occurs.

●436 Feather money (8) is the most important object of value.

8. [Ethn., I, pp. 114 f. The statement there that various pieces of wood carving and other objects are fastened to the ends is an error; cf. Foy, Ethn., II, p. 145, footnote 9. In part this is a matter of reinforcements or packing for the rolls of money (in Edge-Partington and Heape, I, 165, No. 2, the meaning is not at all clear), in part amulets. Concerning the amulets that are packed in, each with special magical power, see also Jennings, JAI, XXVIII, p. 164. Edge-Partington and Heape, I, 163, No. 2, illustrate one specimen of the painted rectangular boards, which perhaps are only amulets, and I am showing two more specimens with interesting appendages here (Fig. 35). Two other similar boards are to be found in the Museum für Völkerkunde in Leipzig (Me 1093 and 1094). In the case of one specimen of feather money in the R.-J.-M., No. 30582 (Speiser Coll.), the ends are sewed

[114]

[118]

/191 cont./

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with a piece of tortoise shell and the cord-plaiting, tapering to a point, with Coix fruits. -- See also Speiser, Südsee, p. 294.]

One roll is said /192/ to contain 1,600 small plates (1); their

1. [According to Jennings, ibid., a roll of feather money is said to be two fathoms long.]

value decreases with age. A new roll is worth two large pigs or a girl. The new pieces, carefully wrapped in tapa [and
[594] probably also placed in a bag], are kept in the houses [on the platform above the fire pit (2) and are displayed to each guest

2. [Jennings, ibid.; O'Ferrall, section "Historical Sketch." According to the former, smoke and heat are supposed to be protection against mold and insects.]

with pride. Through the constant rolling and unrolling, however, they wear out in the course of generations, and as the red feathers are lost their value decreases; old pieces that show almost no red are no longer valued very highly. /Fig. 35 appears here./ [A wealthy man sometimes /Fig. 36 appears here/
[556] erects a special hut in the bush for his feather money (3). When

3. [Cf. also O'Ferrall, ibid. (= Coombe, p. 189). On how the red feathers are obtained (see above, pp. 79 f.), he remarks that the living birds, hanging from the belts, are brought home and, after the red feathers have been plucked out, are set free.]

the feather money is put on show, it is loosely wound on a

[Text continues on P. 89--analyst]

/192 cont./

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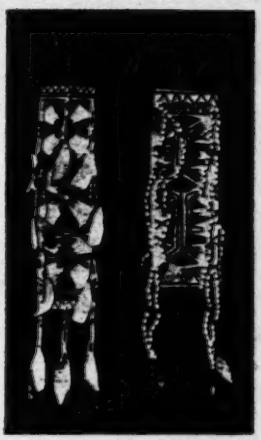

1 2

Fig. 36. Small plates of feather money, which circulate as small change (Ba V 2751); ca. 1/4 natural size.

[Fig. 35.] Boards belonging to rolls of feather money, allegedly "musical instruments" (k.k. Naturh. Hofmus., Vienna, Anthr.-Ethn. Div. 42863 and 42864, Reischek Coll.). Red and black painting on white background; pendants on No. 1 made of European glass beads and pieces of shell, on No. 2 of Coix fruits and pieces of tortoise shell, with a red fruit in center of each. 23.6 and 21 cm. long.

/192 cont./
436 bamboo (or stuck on it?), which rests on two vertical posts (4).]

4. [Jennings, JAI, XXVIII, p. 164.]

Nowadays scarcely any feather money is made (5), and new rolls

5. [Coombe, p. 187, gives the west coast of Nitendi as the place of manufacture of feather money.

can no longer be acquired. Small plates of feather money (Fig. 36) circulate as small change and go from hand to hand individually or in bundles. /193/ When they are made into rolls they are fastened on a flat, plaited band (1).

1. [A band acquired from Dr. Speiser's collection, which is simply plaited out of three cords (a piece of it is reproduced here in Fig. 37) is supposed to have been used this way. The occasional small, glass beads in it are noteworthy. A strap of feather money probably always has more than one such band (cf. Ethn., I, p. 114).]

[177]

Another kind of small change consists of money-mats (Ethn., I, p. 125, Fig. 54, No. 7). They circulate folded (Fig. 38) and have little value.

[Shell money (Ethn., I, p. 114), at least in former times, was the ordinary form of money. It consists of small /Fig. 37 appears here/ shell and coconut disks strung on a fine cord in a certain regular alternation (cf. Fig. 39): sections consisting exclusively of white shell disks alternate with similar sections in which coconut disks are inserted singly or in pairs; in place of the latter, small black fruits, or, under European influence, glass beads, are also used. Fish vertebrae are inserted

[177]

[Text continues on p. 91 -- analyst]

/193/

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[Fig. 37.] Piece of a band that allegedly serves as the underlayer for feather-money plates (R.-J.-M. 30571, Speiser Coll., gift of the Museum Society); plaited out of three light brown cords with European glass beads plaited in; enlarged (original 1/2 cm. wide).

Fig. 38. Folded money-mat which circulates as small change (Ba V 2705); ca. 1/5 natural size. Size of mat spread out 80 by 85 cm.

[Fig. 39.] Shell money, parts of different strands (R.-J.-M. 4501 and 4503, Joest Coll.), consisting of white and whitish-gray shell disks with occasional coconut disks and (in 2) black fruits; 3/4 natural size.

/193 cont./

436 here and there. The length is about four meters (2).] There was

2. [Jennings, JAI, XXVIII (1898), p. 164. In the Joest collection of the year 1897 there were eight strings of money of the kind and length described, which were mistakenly put under New Hebrides, but apparently belong to Nitendi (also on the basis of general considerations, for example, because of the large quantity, which, in the South Seas collection of Joest, is found only among the Santa Cruz objects and those from southeastern New Guinea). The larger white shell disks in Fig. 39, No. 1, correspond perfectly with the shell disks otherwise used for ornaments on the Santa Cruz Islands.]

[also] a kind of shell /Figs. 38 and 39 appear here/ /194/ money on Utupua (Fig. 40). It was [likewise] made of coconut and shell beads strung on cords. The cords were then drawn parallel through pierced sticks, and the wide, belt-like strip wound around a small board. This money is no longer obtainable (1).

1. [The money gives the impression of a bar-belt /Riegel-Gürtel/, somewhat like the form of the central Carolines. The variable form of the disks and their arrangement, however, remind one of the shell money previously discussed. The pendants of Coix fruits, some of them with a pointed oval piece of mussel shell, are typical for Santa Cruz. The broken strands are also

/194 cont./

•436

mended with Coix and glass beads. Hence, the money is apparently made on Utupua itself, but goes back to Micronesian bar-belts.]

Handwork

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[291] [There are a few things to be added concerning the bark-cloth industry (Ethn., I, pp. 115 ff.). As was pointed out above (p. 34), the bark fabrics are used for clothing by the women as well as the men.] The "tapa markers" shown in

[412] Ethn., I, p. 117, Fig. 45, Nos. 4 and 5, are undoubtedly yam knives from the Torres /Fig. 40 appears here/ Islands. I was assured that the drawings were freehand, and a careful examination of the patterns (2) confirms this. It is possible, however, that

[531] 2. [Besides the patterns consisting of rows of rectangles lying longwise shown in Ethn., I, p. 116, Fig. 44, there are also some in Dr. Speiser's collection in which the rectangles lie breadthwise. Individual elements of the patterns are shown in Speiser, AfA, new series, XIII, p. 329, Fig. 19.]

the painting can be traced back to an impression made with stamps or stencils, as is indicated by the division of the painting into rectangular areas about 20 centimeters long and ten centimeters wide. One can easily see, however, that the individual areas were first marked out with fine lines and that the surfaces were covered afterward. Sepia is said to be used as coloring; this is not wholly in accord with /195/ the statement that tapa is made and painted only in the interior (1). There are pieces that

[Text continues on p. 94 -- Analyst]

1. [Cf. Speiser, Südsee, p. 296. The use of sepia does not argue against

/195 cont./

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the manufacture of tapa in the interior, because in other instances the use of coastal material for inland techniques has been verified (for example, on Bougainville, cf. R. Parkinson, "Zur Ethnogr. d. nordwestl. Salomo-Inseln /On the Ethnography of the Northwestern Solomon Islands/," Abh. u. Ber. Kgl. Zool. u. Anthr.-Ethn. Mus. Dresden, VII, 1898/99, No. 6, p. 2). -- The

[113]

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Fig. 40. Shell money from Utupua in the form of a bar-belt from the Central Carolines, with the board upon which it is wound (Ba V 2770); made of small shell and coconut disks, black and white (Coix) fruits, and European glass beads; ca. 1/10 natural size.

[199]

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bark-cloth beaters illustrated in Ethn., I, p. 117, Fig. 45, Nos. 1-3 -- although lacking any original information as to origin -- undoubtedly come from Nitendi, because they belong to the same Joest collection that, with respect to bark cloth, contained only pieces from Nitendi and because of the large number of them (cf. above, p. 91, footnote 2).]

/201 cont./

411 latter two implements also correspond to our spears in the black coloring of individual surfaces. One may conclude that spears must have occurred on the

[778] Santa Cruz Islands in former times because of the duka sticks of the Reef island Matema (cf. below, p. 116), whose upper parts have the form of spear points.]

524 411 /202/ It was possible for me to procure a stone-sling (Fig. 48). Nowadays, however, the sling seems to be kept only as a plaything; at any rate, I never heard that it was used in fighting (1).

[936] 1. [Among the amulets of the feather-money rolls (cf. above, p. 86, footnote 8) are found pointed oval forms that obviously are sling stones: Edge-Partington and Heape, I, 163, Nos. 6 and 7.]

Society and Family

584 According to my information, the father chooses the bride (2), [according to Joest and] according to Coombe, p. 189,

2. [Codrington also says this; cf. Ethn., I, p. 141.]

[583] the mother. Although in former times feather money had to be paid for the woman, nowadays tobacco may be substituted. A woman can be obtained for two boxes of tobacco, the local equivalent of about 14 pounds sterling. The bridegroom has little influence on the choice, especially since he is, of course,

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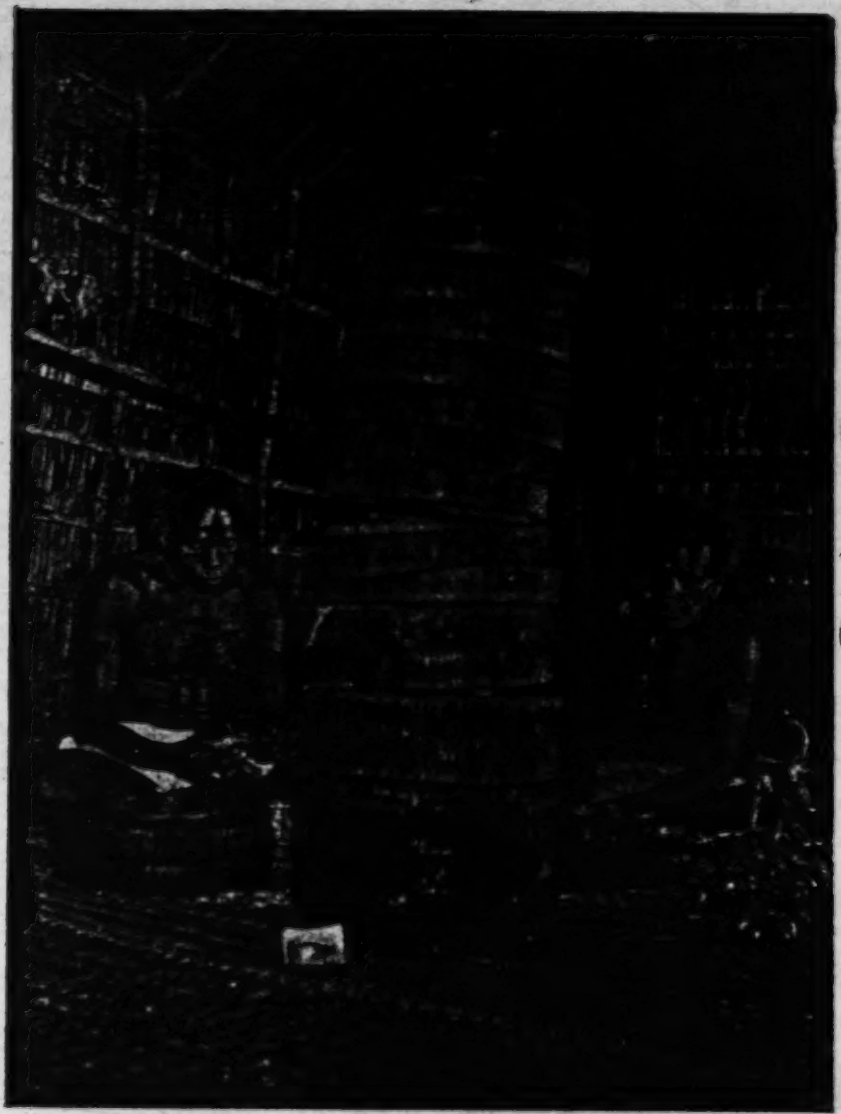

[p94(A)]

3:Davenport E-6 (1960-1960)1962
CH13 Santa Cruz CH13

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FEATHER-MONEY BRIDE PRICE is negotiated by the bride's father (left) and a relative. They have accepted nine of the ten required pieces, which are stacked between them. In bargaining over the tenth and least valuable, the bride's father has rejected

[p 94 (B)]

3:Davenport E-5 (1958-1960)1962
ONI3 Santa Cruz ONI3

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the two pieces flanking the stack.[1] He had earlier demanded Australian currency (foreground) to supplement the bottom piece, which he considered not quite up to standard. This photograph and the others that illustrate the article were made by the author.

[1] [These two pieces appear to be of black feathers in the original color photograph. Those in the stack range from dark red, on the bottom, to nearly colorless, on the top.—Analyst]

[p94 (c)]

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RED-FEATHER MONEY

[p 95 (a)]

Davenport 2-6 (1960-1969)963
OCLC Santa Cruz OCLC

This primitive currency fashioned from feathers, tree sap and fibers is the basis of a complex monetary and trading system in the Santa Cruz Islands of the southwest Pacific

by William Davenport

3:Davenport E-S (1960-1969)1962
C013 Santa Cruz C013

[p95(B)]

●436 One of the most exotic kinds of money in the world today is a belt two inches wide and 30 feet long made of glue, fibers and feathers, particularly the downy red feathers [237] plucked from the breast, head and back [825] of a tropical forest bird. The red-feather currency of the Santa Cruz Islands of the southwest Pacific nonetheless fits the most rigorous definition of [556] the term "money." It serves as a means of accumulating wealth and as a universal medium of exchange in the highly diversified commerce that flows among these islands. The currency itself is fully interchangeable, each belt having a precisely negotiable value in terms of other belts. Against the recent invasion of the [177] Australian pound, moreover, the red-[583] feather money has kept its integrity. It is still the only acceptable specie for the purchase of brides, fine pigs and certain forms of labor.

121 436 This improbable currency demonstrates that the use of money is not an economic sophistication limited to high civilizations. Many, but by no means all, primitive peoples have devised moneys of their own. Although the forms of the currencies are as diverse as any of man's inventions—running the gamut of animal, vegetable and mineral matter in the live, raw and processed states—the maintenance of these so-called primitive monetary systems requires the balancing of the same equation of supply and demand that confronts the U.S. Treasury and the Federal Reserve System.

435 436 121 If a currency is to serve as a common denominator of value, its value in turn must be carefully regulated. This is one of the most delicate operations in the management of a modern state. It involves adjustment of the demand for as well as supply of money, achieved by control over both the flow and the production of the currency. To a certain ex-

3:Davenport E-5 (1968-1980)1982
ON13 Santa Cruz ON13

[795(c)]

495 tent, especially for purposes of international exchange, the Western capitalist
436 economies still refer their currencies to
121 the value of gold on the world market. But in the main it is the scope of the modern state's authority and the extent of its jurisdiction that effectively fix the value of its currency.

Lacking the power to regulate demand (by such devices as manipulation of the interest rate), primitive societies must rely on measures that control the supply of currency against the demand in their completely free markets. Frequently the supply is limited by natural or social circumstances beyond the control of its users, much as the scarcity of gold or silver once set the value of the dollar or the pound. Often, however, the nature of the currency is such that the society could "mint" it without limit. Scarcity is then maintained by some convention that, through consumption, destruction or deterioration, renders the currency valueless and withdraws it from circulation.

The red-feather currency system shows both principles in operation. The supply of new money is regulated by the availability of the red feathers and by the output of the hunters and artisans who make the money; old currency goes out of circulation because it loses value as its color fades. Produced by the na-
436 tives of Santa Cruz Island itself, the red-feather currency circulates throughout most of the islands in the group. In
[631] these islands, where the indigenous political organization has never extended beyond a single village, it functions as international currency, the common medium of exchange among peoples who speak different languages and live in contrasting ecological settings.

131 The Santa Cruz Islands, part of the
[648] British Solomon Islands Protectorate,

3:Davenport E-5 (1968-1980)1982
C013 Santa Cruz C013

[P95(D)]

131 are scattered over some 15,000 square miles of the Pacific Ocean just north of the New Hebrides Islands. Santa Cruz, a volcanic island, is the largest in the group as well as its financial center. About 25 miles to the north is a chain of small coral islets called the Reef Islands, and midway between these and Santa Cruz [133] is Tinakula, a volcano too spectacularly [361] active for human settlement. The Duff Islands, 60 miles northeast of the Reefs, are remnant peaks of a narrow volcanic ridge. The only other large islands of the group are Utupua and Vanikoro, respectively some 40 and 80 miles south of Santa Cruz.

177 Partly as the result of a long history of inhospitality to visiting mariners and missionaries, the islands were left pretty much to themselves even through the first two decades of this century, when colonial powers were asserting dominion over other islands in the Pacific. It was not until 1923 that the British assumed [648] direct administration of the islands, which they had claimed since 1899, and only since World War II has the Santa Cruz group actually been drawn into the current of world affairs. Today some 161 7,000 people inhabit the islands, most of them concentrated along the north coast of Santa Cruz and in the eastern Reef Islands. The people of the Duffs 144 and the western Reefs speak a Poly- 197 nesian language and are racially similar to the Polynesians of the central Pacific islands. The darker Melanesians of the eastern Reefs and Santa Cruz itself speak four local languages that constitute an independent language family. Melanesians also live on Utupua and Vanikoro, but their three languages belong to the large Malayo-Polynesian 184 family. The cultures of Santa Cruz and 436 the islands north of it are similar in spite of language and racial differences, and 438 it is through this area that the sea-

3:Davenport 2-6 (1968-1980);1982
CH13 Santa Cruz CH13

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[436]
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feather money circulates. Utupua and Vanikoro have different cultures and do not use feather currency, although their economy is closely linked to that of the red-feather islands.

Diversity and specialization, necessitated in part by differences in geology and geography, characterize the econ-

[+ 96(A)]

438 463 canoe building, weaving, the manufacturing of bark cloth, tools and ornaments—and currency making—are indigenous to one or another small island or to one village on an island. Each of these specialized industries and crafts is regarded by its practitioners as a right [428] inherited in the family line, and only individuals in the proper line of succession may manufacture currency, go shark fishing, build canoes or follow any other trade.

438 This primitive division of labor requires in many instances that raw or semiprocessed materials be brought from one district or island to another, where the goods are finished for local consumption or for export. In the busy 437 commerce of the interisland economy goods are rarely bartered. They are sold for currency: feather money or, increasingly, Australian currency. For all who participate the motivation of this trade goes beyond the exchange of necessities and native luxuries; the islanders buy and sell for the express purpose of making money. The accumulation of money 556 is the way to prestige. But since the currency itself is perishable, prestige finds its tangible expression in spending as well as in accumulation, above all in helping to buy brides for members of one's family and friends and in giving [642] feasts. Prestige won in these ways is the source of political power and authority.

436 [438] [675] The red-feather currency is made only on Santa Cruz Island. It is made on contract for a specific purchaser, who negotiates individually with the three different hereditary specialists whose combined skills are required for its [463] manufacture. The first specialist snares the little jungle bird whose down sup-

438 102

1 EXPORTERS OF WOMEN
2 NAVIGATORS AND TRADERS
3 ARBORICULTURE
4 PIG BREEDING
5 SHARK FISHING
6 SPECIALIZED CRAFTS
7 TARO GROWING

——— RED-FEATHER CURRENCY
——— WOMEN [W]
——— GOODS AND PRODUCE
O FEATHERS AND SHINGLES
• CURRENCY BINDING

438 certain districts of Santa Cruz Island, circulates there and in the Reefs and Duffa.

[p97 (A)]

3:Davenport E-5 (1958-1960)1962
ON13 Santa Cruz ON13

436 463 plies the red color of the money. The second makes individual platelets of pigeon feathers and decorates each with a band of the red down. The third assembles the platelets by binding them on two cords to form a belt.

223 [825] The bird on which the entire system depends is a small scarlet-colored honey eater (*Myzomela cardinalis*) of the rain forest. The bird snarer makes portable perches covered with the sticky latex of a forest tree and fastens at the top of each either a live decoy of the species or a flower that the honey eater likes. Hanging a number of these perches in adjacent trees, he shields himself behind a blind of betel palm leaves and attracts birds into the area by chirping with a whistle made from a tree bud. Investigating the flower or the decoy, the honey eaters approach the sticky perch and are caught by their wings or feet. The bird snarer plucks the red down from the birds' breasts, heads and backs. he does not deliberately kill them in the process, but they usually die as a result. [804] In the half-shell of a coconut he packs tightly the down of 10 birds, and this is the basic unit in which he deals.

[287] The platelet maker usually secures his

[497(c)]

3:Davenport E-5 (1958-1960)1962
ON13 Santa Cruz ON13

287 [223] [825] [381] [824] [804] own pigeon feathers, shooting the gray Pacific pigeon (*Ducula pacifica*) with bow and arrow. With a mucilage made from the sap of the paper mulberry (*Broussonetia papyrifera*), he glues the feathers together into the flexible platelet. The flat surface of a wooden platen, usually about 2¾ by 1¾ inches, serves as a gauge for fashioning each platelet in the proper size. Using the same glue, the craftsman tacks a half-inch band of red down from the honey eaters along one edge of the gray platelet. A piece of currency requires about 1,500 platelets, overlapped like shingles to expose only the band of red feathers. Since one 10-bird packet of down is enough for 50 platelets, about 300 honey eaters are required for a standard piece of new currency.

[436]

The platelets are passed on to the currency binder, who collects and prepares the other necessary materials: [824] [237] long-staple fibers from the bark of a rainforest tree (*Gnetum gnemon*), colored seeds for decoration and pieces of turtle shell. He stretches two three-ply fiber cords from a large stump to a springy sapling set in the ground about five feet away, and he spaces the cords about

[797(D)]

3:Davenport E-5 (1958-1960)1962
ONI3 Santa Cruz ONI3

287
[285] toward each end, he brings the foundation cords together, sheathes them with turtle shell and plaits them into a triangular end piece into which he works a
[283] hallmark design of his own. Finally the cords, braided together, are fastened to
[436] a bark ring. The completed belt of currency is rolled up from the ends toward

[p 98 (D)]

4136
583
516
291
225

2:Davenport 2-5 (1964-1969)1982
ON13 Santa Cruz ON13

[4 98 (E)]

EXCHANGING CURRENCY in the men's clubhouse, the man at the left is selling the piece in the center for the two that flank it.

EXAMINING CURRENCY offered in a bride price, the bride's family considers whether it is up to standard for its denomination.

3:Davenport E-5 (1958-1960)1982
CH13 Santa Cruz CH13

287
436 the center like a scroll, the shingling of the feathered surface resembling the scales of a snake when its spine is flexed.

All three of the skills involved in the [776] manufacturing of feather money are be-[463] lieved to have been given to mortals by munificent spirits who still inhabit the island, keeping a watchful eye on the

[+99 (B)]

3:Davenport E-6 (1968-1980)1982
C913 Santa Cruz C913

436
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[776]
[789]

work of their protégés. None of the tasks requires exceptional skill or a lengthy apprenticeship, but the craftsman depends on secret incantations and talismans to keep in close communion with the spirits. The right to pursue a currency-making skill comes with the inheritance of these magic secrets; no

[799(c)]

3:Davenport E-5 (1958-1960)1962
ON13 Santa Cruz ON13

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[436]

unauthorized person will risk the anger of the spirits by making his own currency. Many of the islands' other specialties have their own supernatural trappings, which reinforce the restrictions imposed by heredity. No specialty is regarded as superior to any other and none, not even currency making, is likely

[Text continues on p. 101]

[p99 (D)]

3:Davenport E-6 (1968-1969)1962
OB13 Santa Cruz ON13

● 436
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[482]
[291]
[487]

DELIVERING BRIDE PRICE, women parade from the groom's village to the bride's, showing off the lumber runway along the way.

[342]

PREPARING BRIDE PRICE for delivery, the groom's family wraps each piece that has been selected in a new piece of cloth.

[7 99(E)]

436
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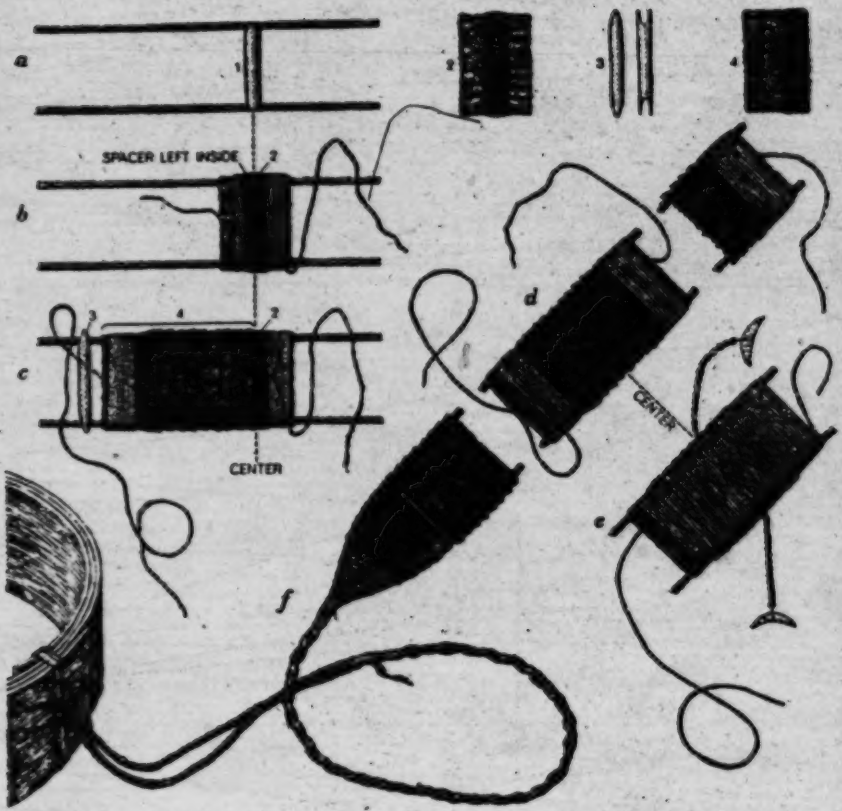

[+ 100 (A)]

St Davenport E-5 (1960-1980)1962
C013 Santa Cruz C013

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BINDER'S MATERIALS include (*a*) two fiber foundation cords with a bone spacer marking the center (*1*), a center platelet with red down in the middle (*2*), a movable spacer (*3*) and platelets with down along one edge (*4*). After placing the center platelet (*b*), the binder overlaps the others (*c*) one by one like shingles,

[7100 (B)]

3:Davenport F-5 (1958-1980)1982
ON13 Santa Cruz ON13

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maintaining the proper width with the movable spacer. He works outward from the center (*d*), which is marked with a woven design and pearl-shell pendants (*e*). At each end (*f*) he sheathes the belt with turtle shell, plaits in his hallmark, braids the two cords and attaches them to the bark cords on which the currency is wound.

[p 100 (c)]

[4 100 (D)]

FOUNDATION CORDS are stretched tightly from a tree stump to a springy sapling. The binder works on a short segment, then unites the belt and reverses it to work in the opposite direction. Each overlapping platelet covers the binding of the preceding one.

Retrospect E-5 (1988-1989)1992
ORCA Basic Case ORCB

287
496

2:Davenport E-5 (1958-1960)1982
CN13 Santa Cruz CN13

[p 101]

463 to be more lucrative than another. The
[287] specialists plying each trade compete
[477] with one another, and the hereditary lines in each occupation are sufficiently numerous and dispersed so that no individual or small group can easily obtain a monopoly or control over the market.

436 Feather currency has absolutely no other use than as a medium of exchange, a standard of value and a store of wealth. It is not worn or displayed. In other words, it has no inherent usefulness; it is a true money. Yet it is produced and circulated in a free market, controlled only by supply and demand and by the principle of devaluation over
[458] time. Inflation is avoided, in spite of the constant issuance of new money, by the depreciation and withdrawal from circulation of old money.

435 The size and richness of color of a
436 new piece of currency determine its original value. These two criteria are reducible to the number of birds and the amount of labor that go into its manufacture. In addition to the down of 300 birds, the average piece embodies 500 or 600 man-hours of work by the three specialists. But the width and sometimes the length of a belt can vary. And the red hue can be more or less saturated depending on how much down was used or the extent to which the less admired orange feathers were discarded.

Depreciation comes with time from damage by vermin and molds as well as from the wear and tear of handling. Great care is taken to protect the currency. The double coils are wrapped tightly, first in a dried fan-palm leaf and then in many layers of bark cloth. Looking more like a bundle of rags than something of value, the coils are stored on a shelf under which the household fire is kept smoldering. The heat inhibits molds, the smoke keeps insects and other vermin away and the wrappings protect the money from smoke damage. In spite of these precautions, each piece of currency eventually deteriorates. When the last bit of color disappears, the belt is discarded.

The value of most currencies is referred ultimately to some standard; in the Santa Cruz Islands the standard is the unseemly combination of pigs and
[583] marriage payments. The minimum payment made to the bride's family by the groom's kin at marriage—the bride price—always consists of 10 units of currency graduated in value from a new or nearly perfect No. 1 ("bottom") piece to a No. 10 ("top") piece, which is just above the threshold of no value. The

3:Davenport 2-6 (1958-1980)1982
C0113 Santa Cruz C0113

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[583]

negotiation of a bride price calls for a session of formalized bargaining, involving the close examination of each coil of currency. Everyone concerned has a clear idea of the range of quality appropriate to each of the 10 units. Thus the bride price supplies not only a basic standard for the value of feather money but also a scale of ideal images in terms of which the "denomination" of any piece of currency can be expressed.

The progression is not arithmetic but geometric: each piece is worth twice as much as the one below it on the scale. If a "top" piece is given an arbitrary value of one, then a No. 6 piece is worth 16 and a "bottom" piece is worth 512. These values are not explicit. No one says that a piece is "worth 128" but all understand that an ideal No. 6 belt has a par value of two No. 7 belts. In the terminology of the pig standard, the pieces from No. 1 to No. 5 are called

[¶ 102(A)]

3:Davenport E-5 (1968-1980)1982
CN13 Santa Cruz CN13

435 "porkers," because a pig suitable for a
436 feast can be bought with currencies in this range; pieces from No. 6 to No. 10 are called "sucklings," because they will buy only pigs too small to be eaten.
437 Except for the negotiation of bride
[583] prices, there is remarkably little haggling over the price of any purchase. The buyer of a pig or canoe or taro roots
[626] offers what he considers a fair amount of currency, and the seller accepts. If the seller feels he has been underpaid, he can seriously damage the buyer's reputation by gossiping about the transaction and refusing to deal with him again.

435 As in the purchase of a bride, certain
436 other purchases must be made with specified pieces of high value. The seller
[437] has no obligation to "make change," so currency is exchanged ahead of time.
[463] This can be done by anyone, but some men who are particularly adept at

[4102 (B)]

435 money changing specialize in it and
436 make a profit. These transactions take
[463] place before an informal gathering of witnesses in the men's clubhouse of a village, where the pieces of currency are draped over a horizontal bar for close comparison. Regardless of who has initiated the deal, the piece of greatest value (the "high piece") is hung over the center of the bar. Alongside it (and always in the direction of the [1776] Nembo River, a spring-fed stream sym- [1778] bolically associated with the currency spirits) is hung the "base piece," the most valuable of the belts to be exchanged for the high piece. On the other side is hung the "crown piece," the piece that makes up the difference in value between the base piece and the high piece. Values are matched in terms of the 10-point scale. For example, if the high piece is an average No. 6 and the base piece is a fine No. 7, a middling No. 7 may suffice as a crown.

In this manner the par value of the high piece is agreed on. But the price at which it now actually sells is something else again. Because high-value currency is scarcer than low-value currency, the owner of the high piece is a seller in a seller's market. The buyer (the owner of the base and crown pieces) must offer additional currency. It is not only that the high piece is newer; there are fewer new pieces in circulation. Hence market value is correlated to scarcity. The greater the par value of the high piece, the greater the spread between this value and the market price. (It is as though a $10 bill were worth a little more than two fives and a $20 bill worth more than two tens by a still larger margin.) It is the difficulty and expense of obtaining high-value pieces on the exchange market that ultimately leads a man to contract with the three currency specialists for a new piece.

438 Since all the feather currency originates on Santa Cruz Island, it must flow continually from its source to the Reef and Duff islands, where it is not manufactured. To maintain this one-way flow of currency the Reef Islanders have traditionally exported some of their [595] women to Santa Cruz. Today the wom- [548] en go only as wives but once some went as concubines. Concubines were clearly distinguished from wives: they were shared by a group of men; they did no gardening or other domestic chores; having no dwelling of their own, they lived in the men's clubhouse. On the other hand, a concubine's possessors

[4 102(c)]

3:Davenport 2-5 (1968-1969):1982
CH13 Santa Cruz CH13

438 could purvey her services as a prostitute, sell her outright or even kill her
[595] without fear of retaliation. None of these
[548] things could be done with wives. But since the purchase price of a concubine was 10 times higher than a bride price, selling a girl into concubinage had its attractions for many Reef Island families. The British Government has forbidden the practice, but Reef Island
[177] women still go south as wives. Their
[583] bride prices are the main source of cur-
[554] rency for their home islands. An imported wife brings extra prestige to a Santa Cruz man, and bride prices for Reef women run about twice as high as they do for domestic wives.

The Duff Islanders get their feather currency not by selling women but by building large sailing canoes that carry on interisland traffic in passengers and cargo. The men of the Duffs do not en-
[437] gage in that traffic themselves; they sell
[505] the canoes for feather currency to the people of a few of the western Reef Islands, who in turn specialize in voyaging and trading throughout the islands. These mariners sail even to the southern islands of Utupua and Vanikoro in search of trade. The two islands are outside the feather-currency area, but their people until recently depended on the
[436] canoes to bring them the shell disks and lengths of woven cloth they used as currency. For these precious items they
[437] traded, at fixed rates, packets of red honey eater feathers, and these were resold on Santa Cruz to the makers of feather currency. In this manner the two different money systems became interlocked and interdependent, and the economies of north and south remain so today, even though there is no longer any traffic in currency materials.

177 Since the end of World War II the
436 Santa Cruz monetary system has come under pressure from the world outside. More and more Australian money has flowed into the islands; it circulates along with the feather currency and is completely interchangeable with it. Today the rate of exchange is roughly one shilling for a piece of feather money of minimum value. This makes the par value of a No. 1 piece 512 shillings, or about 25 Australian pounds. Figured in
[464] terms of labor (at the prevailing net wage rate for unskilled labor in the central Solomons, where most Santa Cruz men work at some point in their lives), the value of a new piece of currency is roughly comparable: about 20 to 24 pounds.

458 Plantation wages have nearly trebled
177 since 1945. The great increase in the

458 177 quantity of Australian money within the Santa Cruz group has caused a precipitate fall in its value in terms of local [435] goods. Once a shilling bought 10 pounds of native tobacco; now it buys half a pound. During the same period, in an [438] effort to increase copra production by channeling more islanders into plantation work, the colonial administration [648] has taken steps that tend to depress interisland and intervillage trade in domestic products. Less feather currency [287] is needed and less is being produced. At the moment there are only five men on Santa Cruz who bind currency, whereas a decade ago there were more [583] than a dozen. Yet marriages go on as before, and men still refuse to marry off their daughters without receiving the traditional red-feather payment. Indeed, there is no area of the islands' economy in which confidence in the feather currency has been shaken. The [465] craft and agricultural specialists still demand red-feather money for their best products.

With the value of feather currency rising as it becomes scarcer and that of Australian money dropping as it becomes more abundant, the market [436] price of feather currency in Australian pounds has increased nearly 20 times in the past 15 years. Although it is recognized that 25 Australian pounds is the appropriate par value for a new piece of feather money, it takes considerably more than that to induce the currency specialists to turn one out. This is, to [223] be sure, not true in the case of the bird [825] snarers. As a result of the decreased production of feather money, the *Myzomela cardinalis* population has been increasing; the snarers can take birds more easily and in more accessible places and they would be willing to work for the old rates. But the labor involved in making platelets and binding new currency [287] has not diminished. Like skilled artisans anywhere, the specialists in these processes prefer to charge more and work less. In pricing their labor they are mindful not only of today's high market but also of the fact that the value of their product in Australian money is likely to be even greater as time passes. As a result the production of feather currency has now fallen behind even the currently reduced demand. As the "bad" Australian money drives out the "good" red-feather currency in accordance with Gresham's law, a simple society in the South Seas is experiencing a monetary crisis familiar to many more sophisticated economies.

●436

[For information on the manufacture of red-feather money see category 287.]

4: Davenport E-5 (1958-1960) 1961 ON13 Santa Cruz ON13

WHEN A PRIMITIVE AND A CIVILIZED MONEY MEET

William Davenport

IT IS A COMMON story these days to read of a primitive economic system or even large segments of an entire social structure which have become greatly altered by the direct or indirect effects of the society coming into contact and participation with the Western money economy. It is held by many that the universality of our money, a medium by which standardized values can be fixed to almost any good or service, is one of the main factors in this kind of change, for primitive societies are frequently organized around more than one system of valuation. One anthropologist[1] has termed this "multicentric," by which he refers to the fact that one system of valuation is frequently applicable to a limited set of transactions, while a different system is required in another set, and moreover, that these are not in theory convertible.

I shall attempt here to outline the current situation among some islands in the southwest Pacific where this is *not* the case. Here Australian money is competing with an indigenous system of universal currency, which, for all we know, has been in existence for centuries. It is an unusual situation, for owing to their economic behavior which is determined by a strong profit motive, the people want both, yet the native currency is disappearing.

The Santa Cruz Group, lying two hundred miles east of the main British Solomons, are a complex of volcanic islands, true atolls, and raised atolls in which live about six thousand people.[2] They speak eight different languages: one Polynesian, three other Malayo-Polynesian but of a different stock from Polynesian, and four others, related to each other, but as yet unrelated to anything else. The northern part of this group consists of Santa Cruz Island, the largest; the Reef Islands, thirty miles to the north; and the Duff Islands, still fifty miles further out to the northeast. The culture in these is, by Melanesian standards, fairly homogeneous, and from the economic point of view, it is convenient to think of them as participating in a single economic system.

One of the striking things about this island economy is the number of district and island specialties. These embrace a wide range of skills and services, among which are agricultural specialties, animal husbandry, fishing techniques, and many arts and crafts such as canoe making, loom weaving, and clothing and ornament manufacture. Some of these crafts require the bringing of raw materials from one district or island to another before the products are manufactured and the finished goods are redistributed throughout the group. These specialties are largely inherited patrilineally, and many are protected from expropriation by others by magical and supernatural means. Despite this individuality in production, there is a high correlation of certain specialties with the ecological zone within which it is found. For example, specialized fishing techniques are to be found associated with types of reefs, with lagoons, or their absence; pig breeding with abun-

1, 2 [For footnotes, see category 116, page 68.-Analyst]

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101
[131]
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[161]
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[463]
[428]

438 dant sandy areas where coconuts can be grown to feed them; taro production with a spe-
[184] cial type of soil; and types of arboriculture with rainfall zones and forestry cover.
As implied by this individual and regional specialization, there is a complex system of trade through which these products are distributed. But this trade is far more than a means of conveying products of one area to another. It is a system in which all those who participate do so with the intention of making a profit. It is real commerce, and the
[556] wealth amassed in this way is expended in bride prices, maturation feasts, rituals, and entertainments through which the initiators and organizers derive prestige. In the familiar Melanesian pattern, prestige, wealth, and authority are but three aspects of the same thing, namely, the political system.

[436] While goods of many kinds flow in several directions, there are some goods which move only in specific directions, and which are basic to the entire system. One of these is feather currency, in terms of which all transactions are made. This is an all-purpose currency, and it is made only on Santa Cruz Island. Its manufacture demands the combined skills of three different hereditary specialists. The currency itself is a belt, six
436 fathoms long, about two inches wide, and made of feathers, fiber, and cord. The feathers
287 are the red down from the breast, head, and back of a small honeysucker *(Myzomela*
[825] *cardinalis)*. Catching these birds in the forest and plucking the down from them is one of the specialties. The second specialty consists of pasting the red down onto platelets or shingles made of ordinary wood pigeon *(Columba* sp.) feathers with the sticky sap taken
[824] from the fruit of the paper mulberry *(Broussonetia papyrifera)*. The third specialist binds these shingles onto a cord foundation to make the finished belt. A piece of finished currency has one surface of red down and an undersurface which shows only the binding. The feathered surface, made up of overlapping shingles, sometimes resembles the flexible scutes of a snake.

435 Feather currency is perishable, for it gets damaged and worn with use and by the
436 ravages of vermin, molds, and mildews. As it gets worn and damaged, it decreases in value and eventually becomes worthless. Thus, new currency must be fed into the system to replace that which is worn out and discarded. Feather currency is of absolutely no other use than as a medium of exchange, a standard of value, and as a means of storing wealth. It cannot be worn, it is not displayed, and it cannot be converted into any other usable form. From this it can be seen that it has all the properties of true money, yet it circulates as a commodity in a free market without regulation except for those forces created by supply and demand. Unlike our money, which we distinguish from commodities, feather currency has some of the properties of durable goods whose value depreciates over time. The original value of a piece of currency is determined by its size and the richness of its color when new. These criteria are reducible to the number of birds used and the amount of labor required for its construction. For an average piece today,
[287] about three hundred birds are necessary. The total labor required by all three specialties is roughly ten to eleven work weeks or about five hundred to six hundred and fifty man-hours. Depreciation of the currency is measured also by two criteria: the amount of red down worn off through handling and defects caused by insects and tropical growths. When the last bit of red disappears from the top surface, the currency becomes valueless and is thrown away.

In addition to the value as determined by the four criteria just mentioned, every piece of currency has its rarity value. This rarity value is always negotiated separately when currencies are exchanged, that is, when one piece is changed for two or more of lower value. The rarity value is an expression of how badly the purchaser of a highly valued piece wants it, and this, of course, is determined by its scarcity. It is a fact that the

higher the value of a piece of currency, the fewer there are; thus the rarity value increases with the value as determined by its condition. Translated in terms of our own money, it would be as if a ten-dollar bill was worth more than ten one-dollar bills because there are fewer of them in circulation. Unlike our money again, feather currency has no numerical units of value which permit easy and exact equivalencies to be made. Rather, the value of this exotic currency is not unlike that of precious gems, were they to be used as a medium of exchange. Each stone would be unique as to quality and size, and value could only be determined by recognized criteria of excellence plus the condition of the market. 495 436

Currency flows outward from its source throughout Santa Cruz Island and on to the Reef and Duff Islands in the north. These latter islands constitute areas of perennial shortage. Balancing this one-way flow of currency is a reverse movement of the most valuable commodity of all--women. The Reef Islands send out some of their women in exchange for bride prices paid in feather currency. Santa Cruz Island never sends its women abroad under any circumstances. Formerly, these women came to Santa Cruz both as wives and as concubines. The concubines were clearly distinguished from wives by the fact that they were shared by a group of men in a form of polyandry; they did no gardening or other domestic tasks normally assigned to women; and while they enjoyed a specially favored social position, they could be purveyed as prostitutes, sold outright, or even killed by the will of their owners alone. Bride prices for concubines were much higher than for ordinary wives--ten times higher to be exact. Due to government regulations, wives only are brought to Santa Cruz Island nowadays, but these are the prestigeful marriages, and their bride prices are larger than those of domestic unions. 438 [595] [548] [583] [554]

This one-way movement of women is correlated with an interesting population phenomenon. Santa Cruz Island population statistics reveal an abundance of males as compared with females of marriageable age, while in the Reef Islands the ratio is nearly even. This abundance of men is a phenomenon which has been noted in other Melanesian and New Guinea populations, but it has neither been investigated nor explained. [162]

The Duff Islands in the extreme northeast corner of the group come into the economic picture, not by sending out women, but by being specialists in making large sailing canoes in which cargos and passengers are transported interisland. These canoes are mainly sold to the Polynesian-speaking people of the small atolls of the Western Reef Islands who make their money by voyaging and trading throughout the group. Formerly, they sailed as far as the southern islands of Vanikoro and Utupua, ninety miles south of Santa Cruz Island. These islands depended upon receiving ground shell discs and special lengths of loom-woven fabric of banana fiber, specialties of certain districts of the Reef and Santa Cruz Islands, which were used as currency there. For these they traded feathers used on Santa Cruz Island for the making of feather currency. These shell and fabric currencies of Vanikoro and Utupua have no currency value in the island where they were made, and feather currency has no value in the former islands. [396] [505] [436] [184]

The Santa Cruz Group has a long history of contact with European civilization, beginning with Mendaña's second voyage in 1595. For the most part, however, the early contacts had little effect on the islanders, but were disastrous for the Europeans. Mendaña himself and many of his company died on Santa Cruz Island, Carteret lost some of his men there also when he attempted to land, La Perouse and his entire expedition perished on Vanikoro, and late in the nineteenth century Commodore Goodenough and a dozen Anglican missionaries, including one bishop, met death in several attempts to bring this island group within the confines of the British Empire and Christendom. 177

From 1900 onward the situation began to change. The few recruits who had gone away to work on plantations, and schoolboys who had gone away to mission schools returned [464]

177 with diseases. After several great epidemics, the population set into a decline which has
[464] only now been arrested. The British Solomon Island Protectorate brought them under
[648] direct governmental control in the mid-1920's, and more and more men began going out to work under regulated recruiting conditions. These recruits, of course, returned with trade goods. All of these factors influenced the economic system greatly, but trading and
177 the use of feather currency went on as before. There is certain evidence that the cessa-
436 tion of feuding and the importation of steel tools and other articles of civilized manufacture actually stimulated the internal economy rather than depressed it. Small amounts of Australian currency did get into circulation as early as 1930, but not in sufficient quantity to alter the internal monetary system. By the end of the Pacific War, however,
[464] the situation had dramatically changed. Recruiting shot up, laborer's wages increased greatly, imported trade goods, though never really plentiful—not even today—became well distributed, and appreciable amounts of Australian money came to be used alongside of and interchangeably with feather currency. As regards currency, the acculturation dilemma had started. The two currencies were in circulation side by side, and it seems as if it would be a matter of simple choice of one over the other. Now let us look at the results of this choice situation after more than a decade of real competition between the two currencies.

458 The production of feather currency has dropped far below what it normally would be,
177 but the demand for it has remained constant. As a consequence, the value has risen
436 sharply and continues to rise. By comparisons of its purchasing power in pigs and in bride prices, the value has risen 200 to 300 per cent in the past fifteen years. This deflation applies equally to Santa Cruz Island where it is made and to the outer islands toward which it flows and where it has always been scarcer. Conversely, Australian money has increased as more and more men have gone out to work and brought back some of their net incomes in cash. From comparisons of savings of wealthy men, it is estimated that the amount of Australian currency in circulation has risen at least 400 per cent in the past fifteen years. Its buying power with respect to imported trade goods has remained roughly the same, for these prices have risen along with wages. The demand for Australian money has certainly increased as people have come to depend more and more upon imported goods which can only be purchased with it, but its buying power with respect to local products—pigs, for instance—has greatly diminished as it has become more plentiful.

As always, these two currencies are, in theory and in fact, perfectly convertible, even though there are some difficulties in fixing values due to the nonquantified means of valuation in feather currency. But with feather currency becoming scarcer and Australian money becoming more plentiful, the exchange rates have been altering drastically. As an illustration, a piece of feather currency which could have been purchased easily for one pound in 1945 might now command as much as twenty. Even at this price, an owner might be reluctant to part with his feather currency, for he may not wish to convert from a currency which is increasing in value to one which in terms of the internal economy is doing the opposite. Because of this unwillingness, it has become harder to fix a value in Australian money for feather currencies of very high value (i.e., those that are very scarce), while those pieces of very low value are easily converted or exchanged.

[287] The slowdown in the production of feather currency is traceable directly to the actions of one of the three specialists, the binders. There are but five of these men currently working on Santa Cruz Island. Since their own needs for feather currency can be easily satisfied by their own work, they wish to ply their trades principally for Australian money. Like skilled workers anywhere, they prefer to work less for large margins of profit than more for small margins. There are young men in the line of inheritance, but

they, for the time being at least, prefer to go out to work for wages rather than to stay home as the older men do. As a result of this, it takes nearly forty pounds to pay for all the materials and services required for a single piece of new feather currency. This is roughly equivalent to over one year's net earnings in the labor lines of a plantation. In effect, feather currency is being priced off the currency market. In contrast to the binders, the bird catchers are eager to work for old rates, for the lack of production of currency has seen a marked rise in the bird population. Birds are abundant in areas close at hand, and they are easy to catch. To the catchers, this means they do not have to work as hard or long to snare the required number for an order as they formerly did.

Despite this financial crisis, feather currency continues to be an absolute necessity in normal social relations. Most men are unwilling to marry off their daughters without receiving bride prices paid in the conventional manner. Pig breeders, too, demand payment in feather currency for fine animals that are to be used in maturation ceremonies, and the same feelings are held by the many turtle fishermen and the shark fishermen who furnish the special meat for ceremonial occasions. Nowhere has the confidence in feather currency been undermined. In fact, just the opposite realization—that it is becoming increasingly valuable—is what is at the bottom of the shortage. Since the currency is perishable, it cannot be hoarded indefinitely and retained as a kind of special purpose heirloom, to be exchanged only on ceremonial occasions. If present trends continue, then it must eventually disappear, and its functions will be assumed by the use of Australian money.

If one were to look casually at this situation, without knowledge of the internal dynamics, this would appear to be a simple instance of diffusion. A case in which a new element—Australian money—is replacing an old element on a one-for-one basis. It might seem like a simple choice situation, exactly like many others created by acculturation—a case where the native is choosing one object in preference for another according to some utilitarian scheme of values. One could even argue that the replacement is a rational economic choice based on the knowledge that one is convertible to the other, and one has the more general usage; therefore the more general one will be chosen. The apparent choice makes economic sense, too, for Australian money is not perishable, it cannot depreciate with age, and it is easier to carry, to use, and to exchange. All of these utilities are indeed recognized, but they have not shaken the traditional confidence in the indigenous currency.

This apparently simple case of change is analagous to kinds of monetary crises our own society has experienced when, during the bimetallic era, the relative values of gold and silver got out of hand; when various paper moneys were issued on hard currencies; and when international exchange rates between currencies fluctuated. In these situations, people always hang on to the more valuable currency, creating a scarcity, and taking it off the market. It seems, then, that Gresham's Law and the Doctrine of Bimetallic Flows are as applicable to this primitive monetary system as they are to civilized systems.

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NOTES

1. Bohannon, Paul, "The Impact of Money on an African Subsistence Economy," Journal of Economic History, XIX, 491-503. 1959.

2. Field work in the Santa Cruz Group was carried out during 1958-60 as part of the Tri-Institutional Pacific Program (Bishop Museum, University of Hawaii, Yale University), supported by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

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ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE: PROCEEDINGS.

000 **Africa, North.** **Caton-Thompson.**

A Revision of Recent Research upon some Stone-Age Problems in North Africa. *Summary of the Rivers Lecture by G. Caton-Thompson and illustrated by lantern slides, 9th April, 1935.*

75 The prehistory of Kharga Oasis as established by three seasons' field work in the northern area, to be continued southwards, is used as a base from which to explore other current prehistoric problems in North Africa.

The position of the oasis in the eastern, most arid, part of the African desert belt, endows it with special value for determining increases of Pleistocene moisture, free from fluvial influences. Early Quaternary deposits of extreme aridity are noted. Nor does the distribution of flint tools suggest that, even in the Middle Palaeolithic maximum of moisture, man's movements were unfettered by abundant rainwater. On the depression floor, implements clung, even in that epoch, to the two areas of artesian mound-springs; elsewhere they are absent or scarce. Likewise on the scarp, tools crowd only in the localized regions of travertine formation, deposited largely by springs and seepage from the junction of an impermeable shale bed underlying the plateau limestone, in part by surface drainage. Nature's subterranean waterworks thus play a large part in prehistoric supply. Hence groups of surface implements found at points in the Libyan Desert and Sahara, days from water, demand investigation. Motoring and other parties who collect such tools without plotting their position, and rendering an account of the local hydrography (mound-springs may be denuded to desert level, and recognized by digging only) destroy evidence of untold potential value. Mound-springs seem certainly to occur in French North Africa.

The Upper Acheulean exhibits non-local peculiarities which link with Palestine (Umm el Qatafa and level F. at Tabūn), and less strongly with assemblages from Tebessa. Nothing comparable is yet recorded from the Nile Valley, possibly owing to insufficient work.

An Acheulco-Levallois phase is succeeded by two or three different facies of Levalloisean, whose relative position *inter se* is undetermined. Physiographical evidence for the age of Kharga Aterian culture assigns it to oncoming aridity, used as a convenient datum for Upper Palaeolithic distinction. Its typology suggests an archaic aspect, where tanged points are scarce, and the tanged end-scrapers and diminution in size which mark many Aterian groups in French N. Africa are absent.

Vaufrey's evidence for the relegation of Capsian culture to final Palaeolithic or Mesolithic times, will, if fully accepted, force a revision of ideas concerning Aurignacian origins in Western Europe and Kenya, and re-orient conceptions of authorship and date of desert pictographs.

The juxtaposition of Aterian and Ibéromaurusian at north-westerly sites seems to indicate the survival of a debased Aterian into very 'late' times. Evidence for this is lacking in Kharga, but is inherently probable.

The creation of Aterian types by means of 'culture-contact' with a blade and burin group, often adduced also to explain Stillbay, Bambata and Sebilian eccentricities, will hardly bear examination in view of the apparent absence of a contemporary Capsian culture. Independently of this consideration, inherited tradition from the Upper Acheulean may, in Kharga, be more reasonably invoked. The Kharga Aterian is succeeded, unconformably, by a blade culture of Capsian affinities with microliths, querns, but no pottery. In spite of the presence of small uni- and bifacial tanged arrow-heads and leaf-shaped points, usually regarded as Neolithic farther west, it seems likely the period is Mesolithic, for it develops at other sites into a true Neolithic by the addition of axes, large concave-base arrow-heads of the Fayum A group, a macrolithic tool-bag and scraps of pottery—all absent in the presumed Capso-mesolithic earlier group. It seems probable that later Aterian groups, yet to be discovered, will bridge the gap without further intermediary stages.

Notes on Red Feather Money from Santa Cruz, New Hebrides. *Summary of a communication presented by H. G. Beasley, 30th April, 1935.*

● 436 114 **76** The first notice of this form of currency was by Codrington in 1891, since when some fourteen other writers have briefly recorded a few inaccurate notes. One writer states that they are war belts, and all copy Codrington in stating that the red feathers, which are an essential

6:Beasley U-4 (no date) 1935 ONI3 Santa Cruz ONI3

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feature, are derived from a parroquet. The writer has had the assistance of two local residents, who have kindly made enquiries over the last two years. Some twenty specimens are known to be preserved in museums, many of which are but poor examples of the original coils. It has been definitely ascertained that in the past no less than eleven distinct grades of this currency were recognised, the difference varying with the width of the coils, and the introduction of recognised quantities of feathers other than red, the lowest grade (of which none exist to-day) being composed entirely of black feathers.

436 174 [173] [463] [173] [171] [301]

Whilst the native versions as to the conception of this currency definitely state that it is comparatively modern, it should be borne in mind that in view of the conservatism of the native mind, such a highly specialised example of technical effort must represent many generations of time. Whilst the method of manufacture, coupled with the recognised eleven grades of values, and the fact that only the bush people have this knowledge, all point to a state of affairs which must be of considerable antiquity. This is further strengthened by the multiplication of the various interests involved. First are the people who only capture the birds and extract the feathers. Secondly there are the people who stick on the feathers to the plates, and lastly, those (invariably bush people) who work up the plates into the coils. The origin is therefore decidedly uncertain. The natives have, however, retained the name of the originator, and are emphatic that red feather money superseded shell currency. Shell money is still made and is produced as single strings packed in banana leaf bundles, whilst another form consists of broad belts made up of numerous strands of shell beads, examples of which are well known from the Carolines.

There are no records obtainable to-day as to the origin of this remarkable currency, but examination of these coils does, however, reveal certain features, and the very obvious results indicate that they were originally body belts, a common form of personal ornament all over Melanesia, and proof is established by a series of comparative examples. One may surmise even further, though without definite proof, that formerly the belt was a bark one on which the feathers were fixed direct, and as such belts become recognised commercial units, the desire to create similar belts of higher values became a form of economic necessity; so the loose band of feather work was evolved, which, however, still retained the original finish to the ends, and the cords for tying, and the original bark belt simply became the frame on which the feather belt was for convenience wound. Specimens of the currency, both in process of manufacture and the completed coil, with slides, were shown.

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Handbook of African Tribes.

77

A meeting of the *African* group was held on the 9th April to consider the possibility of effecting co-operation between the Royal Anthropological Institute and the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures in regard to the *Handbook of African Tribes* contemplated by the latter. It was generally agreed that the *Handbook* is a very desirable undertaking and one which the Royal Anthropological Institute should actively support. It was resolved that the Council be recommended (1) to issue a circular, conjointly with other interested Societies and Institutes, to its members advising them of the nature of the projected *Handbook* and inviting the assistance of all such as are in a position to render assistance; (2) to use the group as a medium of all activities concerned with the *Handbook*; that members be invited to enlist their names with the chairman of the group to form a panel of collaborators who may be drawn upon when the schemes for the *Handbook* have made further progress.

As at present conceived, the *Handbook* will consist of three separate volumes under separate editors: (1) South Africa, including South West Africa, Portuguese East Africa, the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland; (2) East Africa, including North Africa, Tanganyika, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Abyssinia, the countries of the Eastern Horn, and North Africa; (3) West Africa.

It is earnestly requested that all Fellows, whether in Africa or not, who are able to help in this work, which it is estimated will occupy some three years, should communicate with the chairman of the African Group (c/o The Royal Anthropological Institute), who will put them in touch with the appropriate editors and suggest the lines along which their assistance will be most welcome. The organisation of such a panel of volunteers appears to be the most effective way in which the Institute may co-operate in this project.

REVIEWS.

ARCHÆOLOGY.

78

Bronzezeitliche und früheisenzeitliche Chronologie: I Italien; II Hallstattzeit; III Kaukasus und frühe Bronzezeit; IV Griechenland. *By Nils Åberg.* (Monographien No. 19 *Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, Stockholm*) 1930–1932.

Dr. Åberg's new chronology of prehistoric Europe is noteworthy, firstly, as indicating the final overthrow of the inflated dates introduced by his